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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 001825

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2014

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SUBJECT: IRISH RESPONSE TO ITER DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 268243

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan Benton; Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

1. On December 20, Post delivered reftel talking points and DOE Deputy Secretary McSlarrow's letter to Eamon Hickey, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Counsellor for European Union Affairs. Hickey noted that the November 25-26 EU Competitiveness Council meeting had not shed light on the Commission's plans to finance ITER. He said that the Irish Government had previously requested details on financing and would reiterate this request early in the New Year. Although the Competitiveness Council had reaffirmed the EU's commitment to a six-party consensus on ITER, Ireland's growing impression was that the Commission was prepared to proceed on its own with the project if necessary, said Hickey. In that scenario, the issue of funding would become even more urgent for Member States as the principal financiers. Hickey also observed that momentum in discussions between Japan and the EU on a possible "privileged partnership" had appeared to dissipate following the Competitiveness Council meeting.

KENNY